

Wassily Kandinsky: The Rhythm of Colour and Form

Learning objective: To analyse the artistic contributions of Wassily Kandinsky, focusing on his use of abstract shapes, emotional colour, and the concept of synaesthesia.

Read each question carefully. Ensure your answers demonstrate your understanding of art theory and historical context. Use the provided word bank to support your explanations.

Wassily Kandinsky was a Russian artist who believed that painting could be like music. He pioneered abstract art, moving away from painting realistic objects to focusing on colours and shapes to express internal feelings. He famously experienced synaesthesia, a neurological condition where he could 'hear' colours and 'see' sounds. His artworks, often titled 'Compositions', are famous for their balanced use of circles, triangles, and lines that create a visual rhythm on the canvas.

Word bank: Abstraction · Composition · Synaesthesia · Geometric · Vibrant · Harmony · Rhythm · Emotion

1. Define the term 'abstraction' in your own words and explain why Kandinsky chose this style over painting realistic portraits. (2 marks)

2. How did Kandinsky's experience of synaesthesia influence his artistic process? (2 marks)

3. Identify two geometric shapes frequently found in Kandinsky's work and describe the role they play in creating visual balance. (3 marks)

4. Compare and contrast a traditional landscape painting with a Kandinsky 'Composition'. Why might some viewers find his work more challenging to interpret? (4 marks)

5. Justify why Kandinsky is often referred to as a pioneer of abstract art. Refer to his transition from representational art to non-objective art in your answer. (4 marks)

6. If you were to create a painting based on a piece of music you enjoy, how would you use colour and shape to represent the tempo and volume of that music? Explain your choices. (5 marks)

7. What might happen to the emotional impact of a Kandinsky painting if all the vibrant colours were replaced with shades of grey? Explain your reasoning. (5 marks)

Draw: Using the principles of abstract rhythm, create a small study in the box provided. Use at least three different geometric shapes and a colour palette that represents a specific emotion (e.g., joy, calm, or agitation).



Extension challenge: Total: /25. Research task: Investigate how other abstract artists were influenced by the 'Blue Rider' group. Write a short paragraph justifying whether art needs a clear subject to be considered 'successful'.